

The Story of a Little Bookstore That Could

Westwinds Celebrates 60 Years in Book Business

By MORAG MACLACHLAN

A business venture that started in a carriage house on Washington Street has reached a major milestone.

Westwinds Bookshop has served the citizens of Duxbury as well as bibliophiles around the world for 60 years. The shop has thrived in three different locations under eight different owners. Recently, several of the shop's former and current proprietors shared their memories of how they got into the book business.

From Manager to Owner

Bob Hale came to Duxbury in the 1950s for a job at the Duxbury Playhouse. He did not know at the time that he would meet a woman who would change his life.

"I fell in love with Duxbury. A friend of mine, Gertrude Coffin, said to me 'if you want to be a success in life, find out where you want to live and then figure out how to remain there,'" Hale said.

In 1946, a woman named Margaret Metcalf decided to open a bookshop on the second floor of her carriage house on Washington Street. Westwinds Bookshop and Lending Library opened its doors in June of that year. Metcalf lived previously in a home in Concord named Westwinds. She then moved to Duxbury, settling in a house with quite a history. Metcalf's home on Washington Street had been the Eagle Tree Inn and before that the home of Fanny Davenport, a stage and screen actress. Metcalf named the home Westwinds by the Sea. She created her bookshop

Metcalf was also one of the financial backers of the Duxbury Playhouse. She and Hale were introduced and when Metcalf learned she was suffering from terminal cancer, she asked Hale to mind her bookshop.

"She was in the hospital frequently and she asked me if I would babysit the bookshop. I was there for four years," Hale said with a laugh.

Metcalf's spirit amazed Hale. He said she vowed to publish a collection of letters written by her son, a World War II chaplain, before she died. The day after the final proof for *With a Cross and a Shovel* was sent to the publisher, Metcalf died. In her will, she left the land and the bookshop to Hale.

"The bookshop was more like a library. She had a wonderful collection with children's books, fiction and travel," Hale said. "She really wanted to work with the community and make the shop a real gathering place. Reading groups and theater groups met there. She also hosted art exhibits."

Since Hale was only in his 20s at the time, the bookshop was sold to former employee Debbie Nelson Taussig. Hale said she relocated the shop to Snug Harbor next to the fish shop, where she operated the bookshop for about eight years before remarrying and moving away.

Franny Barker, another former employee, purchased Westwinds next. Hale said operating the store was a hobby for Barker and the bookshop was not open regular hours. She sold the business to Charlotte Horner. Hale said Horner also ran the shop during irregular hours.

"She said the only thing that sold in Duxbury was romance novels," Hale said.

Hale felt Duxbury's residents' interest in literature was more complex and he bought the shop in 1983 with a desire to recreate the atmosphere of Metcalf's original store. He started by relocating the shop to a two-story space in the Duxbury Marketplace.

"I started a writers group when I bought it and we still meet today," Hale said.

Hale ran Westwinds until 1990 when he sold the shop to Nancy Blake. Hale said she ran the store by herself and made the shop only one story so that it would be manageable.

Soul of the Town

Blake was at the helm of Westwinds for eight years before selling the bookshop to Cissy Greenbaum. Hale believes Greenbaum operated the store with the same spirit as Metcalf.

"Cissy really brought it back," Hale said. "Cissy is a real book person."

Greenbaum had been a bookseller since 1992. She said more free time and a love of literature motivated her to buy Westwinds in 1998.

"I have a passion for books and, at the time, my son was going off to college. I knew I had room in my life for a little adventure," Greenbaum said.

Greenbaum said the first year of running the shop was a rollercoaster ride, but the energy of Westwinds' patrons was contagious. The bookstore drew bibliophiles from Duxbury, Kingston, Marshfield and Abington as well as part time residents from out of state or out of the country.

"I had a woman who was a diplomat that moved to Hong Kong who would call at Christmas time each year to order her books," Greenbaum said. "Service is what we sold and a passion for books."

Greenbaum also strived to make Westwinds a meeting place. She collaborated with Carol Jankowski of the Duxbury Free Library to host author talks. The Harry Potter phenomenon climaxed under Greenbaum's ownership and midnight Harry Potter book release parties were born.

Greenbaum sold the shop to Chris and Marilyn Haraden in 2005. She continues to purchase her books at Westwinds, having just finished *On Beauty* by Zadie Smith and having started *The Google Story* by David Vise and Mark Malseed.

"I paid off a good hefty Christmas bill," Greenbaum said. "Westwinds is a treasure that needs to continue for the soul of the town. It was a brave thing of Margaret Metcalf to do in a small town and it is quite an accomplishment to be open for 60 years. I encourage people to buy local and stay in town."

Local Bookshop Celebrates 60 years

Sixty Years Strong

The official 60th anniversary took place last summer under the Haradens' ownership. The Hanover couple purchased the store in April 2005. Marilyn Haraden, a former chef, said this is the first time she and her husband have owned a bookshop, but that they have always enjoyed reading and writing. In fact, Chris Haraden is the editor of the *Hull Times*.

"We have always loved books. Chris wrote one book and contributed to three," Marilyn Haraden said. "Originally we thought he would run a large bookstore in Hanover or Hingham. But then we came across Westwinds and we knew it would be perfect for me."

Haraden, who also cares for the couple's two sons, 5-year-old Matthew and two-year-old Adam, said "it's nice to get out of the house and talk to people." Haraden is in the shop three days a week and works on paperwork and billing from home. She said her husband works on Saturdays and is in charge of the store's website, publicity and advertising.

"We have a great staff here. We are all about customer relations. It's fun to help people personally pick out books for themselves and others," Haraden said.

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- Bob Hale



Bob Hale looks on as Cid Ricketts Sumner signs copies of her book *Traveler on the Wilderness* for Margaret Metcalf (left) and Madeline Leonard (right) at Westwinds Bookshop in 1957.

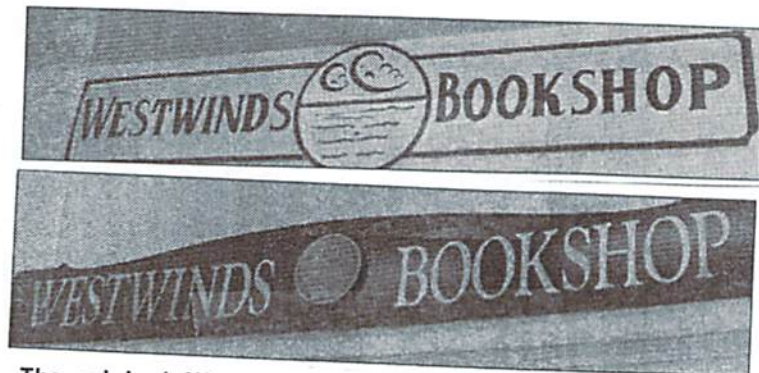


LuAnn Keenan and Westwinds co-owner Marilyn Haraden enjoy helping patrons find the perfect book to read.

Haraden said the shop celebrated 60 years of Westwinds

by offering special sales throughout the month of July. The original Westwinds Bookshop sign that hung during Metcalf's days is still found on her old Washington Street property. The Patton family has the sign hanging in their kitchen. It is white with blue lettering. Between the words "Westwinds" and "Bookshop" is a circle picturing waves meeting clouds. The sign that hangs behind the counter of the current Westwinds has the exact same design just a different color scheme.

"In addition to being our 60th year, this is also the 50th year since Mrs. Metcalf died. Kind of a somber anniversary, but significant in that her legacy has continued for so long," Chris Haraden said.



The original Westwinds Bookshop sign still hangs at the store's first address on Washington Street. The sign sits in the kitchen of the Patton family. The current sign at the shop in the Duxbury Marketplace features the same design as the original sign.